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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

GENERAL BOOKS

The Freedom of the Seas. By LOUISE FARGO BROWN. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 1919. Pp. xvi, 262. \$2.00.)

NOTWITHSTANDING the eclipse of number 2 of the Fourteen Points, the phrase "freedom of the seas" continues to make its appeal. The timeliness of the present volume is diminished somewhat by the excision of the subject from the covenant of the proposed League of Nations. As neutrality, we are told upon the highest authority, will no longer fit into the general scheme of things, why discuss the freedom of the seas? Which is one way, of course, of looking at it—as a mere chapter in the law, or policy, of neutrality. To take this point of view is by no means to see the whole, as the author of this interesting volume has clearly shown. Indeed the phrase has been used as a means to combat exclusive sovereignty over the seas, to dispute fishing-rights, to break down monopolistic self-sufficiency, to extinguish the slave-trade, and even to protect it, all in time of peace, and generally to challenge sea-power in time of war.

The author frankly states that her narrative is based upon an "attempt to discover what the phrase has meant in the past". She shows that since Grotius used *Mare Liberum* (which of course did not mean the freedom of the seas in any modern sense) the phrase has been protean in allusion. The varying content has had some trace, some suggestion, of a common factor of a juristic kind—the "good customs of the sea", or the law of nature, or justice, or even humanity, according to the standards or policies of the moment.

Miss Brown's book is distinctively historical and not legal or theoretical in character. A bibliographical commentary shows the main sources from which the narrative was drawn, a really valuable sketch of the literature of the subject. One might suggest that Mahan's writings should have been included, while Stephen's *War in Disguise* and Bowles's *Sea Law and Sea Power* are but earlier and later chapters of continuous British commentary. Even if the book be professedly popular, an index might have been added.

Beginning with the well-known Antonine rescript as a text, the author traces the rise and fall of sea-sovereignty, passing into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the modified conception that the struggle for sea-freedom was essentially a struggle for freedom of commerce. On the one hand, with British sea-power there was developed "a field of responsibility for policing the seas until it comprehended all the waters

of the globe". Upon the other hand were the interests of commercial nations "more concerned with their prosperity when at peace than with their advantage when at war". Both made for the freedom of the seas in time of peace, for both sought a régime of law upon the sea. In time of war all was changed. Sea-power asserted the legality of the *Consolato*. Land-power challenged it. Those states, strong neither on land nor at sea, hoping to be neutrals more often than belligerents, sought first to modify the rigorous rule of ownership, and its extensions, by treaty stipulations, and later by an appeal to the law of nature. The contests of commercial interests and the influence of these upon the practices of maritime capture during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are well described. The bearings of the law of nature and of the spirit of enlightenment are insufficiently noticed. The connection between the doctrine of sea-freedom and that of territorial waters, as developed by Bynkershoek, is not indicated. With the short-lived Franco-British treaty of 1786, the century-old commercial antagonism upon the seas gave promise of abatement. The wars which so quickly followed contorted, and gave a radically different connotation to, the phrase freedom of the seas. Barère sought to use it to curb British sea-power in terms which have been recently familiar. The attempt to revive the claims of the Armed Neutrality of 1780, had they proved successful, would only have assisted in the establishment of the Continental System. Pickering realized in 1797 that European land-power unchecked by British sea-power would be intolerable, a conclusion long deferred, or resisted, by his recent successors in office. The nineteenth century sought to establish the freedom of the seas by a series of conventions, the last of which, the Declaration of London, is the chief relic of a fatuous optimism. The law of the sea of yesterday, in the judgment of the author, has been a failure (with which conclusion one may legitimately disagree), and she asks, "is it not time to tear up the poor fabric and rear a better law upon a better basis?" This question is sought to be answered in the concluding chapter. "The only possible solution . . . is international control of the seas through a league of nations." Admitting that in time of peace the seas are free, "As long as war on land is recognized, peace cannot arbitrarily be enforced on portions of the sea any more than upon the sea as a whole without producing inequalities that nations find intolerable". Therefore international control of the seas through a league of nations must be predicated upon the extinction of warfare upon land; something which the most devoted advocates of the league do not now claim for it. The alternative is "future contention for that so-called sea freedom which really means sea power". These predictions do not seem profound, though in the present situation one guess is possibly as good as another. They do not add much to the value of the book. To trace the various meanings of the phrase from the period of discoveries, through trade rivalries and contests of sea-power, through the idealism of the nineteenth century to the shipwreck

of the Great War, was an excellent idea, and in the form presented by the present volume, it is well done.

J. S. REEVES.

Democratic Ideals and Reality: a Study in the Politics of Reconstruction. By H. J. MACKINDER. (New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1919. Pp. xi, 266. \$2.00.)

MR. MACKINDER is a man of distinction. He has been director of the London School of Economics. He is a member of Parliament. He has written *Britain and the British Seas*. But, up to the present, the most significant fact in his career has been the publication, in the *Geographical Journal* for 1904, of his address on "The Geographical Pivot of History". Since then, everyone interested in the larger aspects of history or human geography has waited impatiently for the book in which he would present his views in their definitive form. The book is now before us, somewhat disguised under the title of *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, somewhat obscured by being made to serve as the basis for "a study in the politics of reconstruction", but a very remarkable contribution, nevertheless, to political thought.

The book is, essentially, a study in the strategy of empire, and the author's thesis, reduced to its most obvious terms, is that whatever power controls the area of the Russian empire must eventually control the world. His own statement is, perhaps, less immediately intelligible: "Who rules East Europe", he says, "commands the Heartland: Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island: Who rules the World-Island commands the World" (p. 186). By "World-Island" is meant the entire Old World land-mass of Europe, Asia, and Africa. By "Heartland", Mr. Mackinder, it must be confessed, means somewhat different things at different times; but, primarily, it signifies the central area of Eurasia, in which the rivers flow either to inland seas, like the Caspian and Aral, or into the Arctic Ocean.

This area has been of the utmost importance in history, and is destined to a still greater future. The marginal powers of the past, like Greece and Rome, have been overthrown by attack from the rear. The Russian dominions, based upon the impenetrable Arctic, cannot be attacked from the rear, and hence constitute an ultimate seat of power. An organized empire, entrenched in this area, in command of interior lines of communication, would be free to strike at will at any point between the Atlantic and the Pacific.

In chapters III. and IV., Mr. Mackinder considers this area, first, from "the seaman's" and, second, from "the landman's point of view". Chapter V., the Rivalry of Empires, is a study of the influence of Russia in European politics during the nineteenth century; the key to the whole situation in East Europe, Mr. Mackinder thinks, is the German claim to dominance over the Slav (p. 155). The recent war arose from the revolt